

**GLOUCESTER COUNTY
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S
SEPTEMBER 2009 MONTHLY REPORT
Presented Tuesday, October 6, 2009
Prepared by Brenda G. Garton, County Administrator**

CALENDAR ITEMS

Upcoming events:

- Regular Board Meeting, Tue., Oct. 6, 7:00 pm.
- **County Columbus Day Holiday, Monday, Oct. 12.**
- Supervisor Altemus' York District Town Meeting, Tue., Oct. 13, 7:00 pm, Achilles Elementary School.
- League of Voters Board of Supervisors Candidates Forum, Thu., Oct. 15, 6:30 pm, Page Middle School.
- Supervisor Crewe's Gloucester Point Town Meeting, Mon., Oct. 19, 7:00 pm, Abingdon Elementary School.
- Regular Board Meeting, Tue., Oct. 20, 7:00 pm.
- **Election Day, Tue., Nov. 3.**
- Election Central for Local Election Returns, Tue. Nov. 3, 8-10 p.m., Gloucester Library
- Regular Board Meeting, Wed., Nov. 4, 7:00 pm.
- VACo Conference, Homestead, Sun., Nov. 8 – Tue., Nov. 10
- **County Veterans Day Holiday, Wednesday, Nov. 11.**
- Regular Board Meeting, Tue., Nov. 17, 7:00 pm.
- **County Thanksgiving Holiday, Wed., Nov. 25 (close at noon) – Fri., Nov. 27.**
- Regular Board Meeting, Tue., Dec. 1, 7:00 pm.
- **County Christmas Holiday, Thu., Dec. 24 – Fri., Dec. 25.**

AIRPORT AUTHORITY

The County Administrator continues to attend the regular meetings of the Middle Peninsula Regional Airport Authority. The Authority reviewed applications from folks interested in the Airport Manager position which will be vacated by Tim Gaylord effective October 1. The Airport decided to contract with King and Queen County to pay for part-time use of King and Queen's Economic Development Director to serve as Airport Manager, after interviews failed to produce a candidate to whom the Authority offered a position.

ALL EMPLOYEE MEETINGS

The County Administrator conducted three of four scheduled All Employee Meetings during September. These meetings are not mandatory, but all employees were encouraged to attend one of the meetings, during which the County Administrator shared information regarding last year's budget, funds we saved in last year's budget, the Governor's cuts, the state of the current budget, frozen positions, draft Temporary Work Force Reduction (TWFR) and Reduction in Force (RIF) Administrative Policies, flu prevention, flu shots, and various other issues. Additionally, employees were given the opportunity to ask questions. The employees invariably express appreciation for these meetings to keep them informed.

ARK PARK

Repair work at Ark Park after the County Fair is on-going as well as fine-tuning the grade on the new soccer field. Sand has been brought in to address low spots on the new field. Depending upon weather and the field's condition, it may be available for play next spring.

ARRA REPORTING

Our Finance Director and other staff in the Finance Department are registered on the FederalReporting.gov site for the October ARRA reporting requirement, which will begin on October 1. We are required to follow rigorous reporting standards for any component of local government which receives ARRA originating funding.

ARRA (AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT) STIMULUS FUNDS – ENERGY EFFICIENCY CONSERVATION BLOCK GRANTS

The State should release their official EECBG (Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grant) process for small (non-formula grant) localities soon. We will continue to keep checking for the official announcement to see if we have any projects which may qualify.

ARRA STIMULUS FUNDS -- UTILITIES PROJECTS

Over the past several months, our Director of Utilities has explored a number of avenues regarding the potential availability of ARRA funds to solve some of Gloucester's sewer problems. He has spoken with folks from the Department of Environmental Quality, the Virginia Resources Authority, and the Virginia Rural Water Association regarding the availability of ARRA funds for such projects. Unfortunately, Gloucester County does not qualify for any ARRA funding. All of the ARRA money made available to Virginia for utilities projects was funneled through the Revolving Loan Program. Gloucester County does not qualify for Loans under this program based on our MHI (Mean Household Income), which is too high. This includes loans with initial principal forgiveness. The total amount of ARRA money was allocated by DEQ in March. Unless there is a second Stimulus funding from the Federal Government, there is no money presently available to the County. The Director of Utilities will continue to monitor the arena of funding and will forward any report of available funding.

AUDIT WORK

Robinson, Farmer, Cox and Associates (RFC), our independent auditor, has been in county offices in September performing audit work. Auditors spent time with the Department of Social Services, the School Board offices, and the Constitutional Officers. We are not aware of any major problems at this time. A principal with the firm has been working on verifying debt figures. A new GASB standard requires additional reporting, and RFC is helping us implement this new standard. The Finance Department will also be compiling the CAFR (Comprehensive Annual Financial Report) for the year ended June 30, 2009, which forms the basis of our audit report, received later in the year.

BAY AGING COMMUNITY ACTION AGENCY

County and School staff continue to meet with representatives of Bay Aging to explore how the Community Action Agency (CAP) money might be used to best serve youth, specifically in the school system. Areas discussed included mentor initiative, referral of families to BCAP for the establishment of a central "clearinghouse" of assistance services, and summer programs for youth.

BEAVERDAM PATROL BOAT

The patrol boat for Parks, Recreation, and Tourism at Beaverdam Park was repaired and a new motor installed after the boat sank in a storm. Insurance covered part of the loss and county funds from the contingency fund were used for the balance.

BEAVERDAM RESERVOIR -- UTILITIES DEPARTMENT LETTER TO ADJACENT PROPERTY OWNERS

The County's Utilities Director has prepared a draft letter to send to property owners adjacent to Beaverdam Reservoir under both his and the Director of Parks, Recreation and Tourism's signature. The purpose of the letter is to point out that adjacent property owners have some stewardship responsibility for our water reservoir. The letter outlines responsibilities of adjacent landowners and also provides a mechanism for

them to report activity to us that might not be appropriate, as activities along the water's edge could have a detrimental impact on this important water supply.

BUDGET AND CIP PROCESS

Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) requests are being submitted to Nickie Champion. We will be working on the CIP over the next months. Additionally, soon we will issue the letter to Departments and agencies requesting funds to solicit budget requests for next year.

BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR END 08-09

While the June 30, 2009 figures have not been finalized, we are estimating that we will finish the fiscal year with total General Fund Revenue exceeding General Fund Expenditures by \$1.19 million. This situation was a combination of County Departments and Agencies realizing savings of \$640,303 and the School Division realizing savings of \$551,151.

This summarizes the General Fund at June 30th, which includes budget to estimated actual:

	<u>Adjusted</u> <u>Budget 09</u>	<u>6/30/2009</u> <u>Estimate</u>	<u>6/30/2009</u> <u>Over/(Under)</u>
Total General Fund Revenue	55,725,390	53,910,654	(1,814,736)
Total General Fund Expenditures	<u>55,725,390</u>	<u>52,719,200</u>	<u>(3,006,190)</u>
Total Revenue Over Expenditures		1,191,454	1,191,454

Needless to say, these results are far better than we had assured the Board we could accomplish during the fiscal year and are the result of a lot of hard work on the part of all County employees, as well as cut-backs which placed a lot of strain on the staff's ability to deliver quality services to citizens. We are all very proud of the attitude and joint effort this end result reflects.

CERT (COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM) AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

The Emergency Management staff met with several churches during September, and hosted a meeting to promote CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) and emergency preparedness. They will coordinate future meetings to help the faith-based community set up their own disaster plans and there is a desire to create a faith based resource plan to assist the community in post disaster efforts.

CERT (COMMUNITY EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM) COURSE

The County's weekly CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) course was conducted in September over a four week period. We expect to graduate a new group of certified CERT members at the first part of October.

CHRISTMAS ORNAMENT -- HISTORICAL COMMITTEE COLLECTIBLE ORNAMENT FOR 2009

The 11th Edition of the Historical Committee Collectible Ornament is in its final proof stages for printing. This year, the 2009 Ornament will feature the historic Gloucester Woman's Club. The ornament will officially go on sale on Holiday Parade Day, December 5, at the Museum, for \$18.

CLEAN COMMUNITY COMMITTEE ACTIVITY

The Clean Community Committee Clean-Up of Maryus Road was conducted during September. The Clean Community Committee met with Delegate Harvey Morgan to discuss state litter laws and how to strengthen them to help prevent littering problems. The Fall issue of the Clean Communiqué is available at: <http://www.gloucesterva.info/clean/cleancommuniquedefall2009.pdf>.

COLEMAN BRIDGE CLOSING AND RT. 17 ROAD CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

The County posted information on our Website regarding VDOT's announced closing of The Coleman Bridge during September. To make obtaining information easier for citizens, we have a link to the VDOT website on our website, and are also posting up-to-date information on the Rt. 17 VDOT road construction project on our website. As an additional service to citizens, Department of Community Education staff sent out notifications through the County and CommunityConnection e-mail subscriber services about the bridge closing.

COMMUNICATIONS PROJECT -- RADIO SYSTEM AND TESTING

According to our Director of Public Works, dispatch furniture has been delivered and installed in the Communications Center to accommodate the new equipment. Field Coverage testing was conducted in September and will continue into October. Testing consists of three vehicles roaming the County testing ¼ mile grids. There are over 6,000 grids, but only grids that are accessible are tested. Each vehicle has a Motorola representative, a County Representative (Fire or Sheriff employee), and a representative from the County's engineering consultant. So far the system is testing very well. Testing conducted in the High School shows it had great coverage and that the new system tested flawlessly in many locations in the building, which is great news recognizing that the current system is fairly ineffective in that building. Achilles and T.C. Walker have also been tested with similar results. Also, all of Guinea Neck has been tested with great coverage. These tests ensure that emergency personnel will be able to use the new communications network from any location in Gloucester County.

COMMUNITY RATING SYSTEM PROGRAM

Staff in the Emergency Management Department have been working with Codes Compliance to update the website to include all flood related information for the Community Rating System Program, which will help us in our quest to reduce flood insurance rates for citizens. Inclusion of the flood-plain map and information in the last issue of *The Beehive* citizen publication was an important step in compliance to the notification of all residents requirement. The inclusion of this information was a cost savings of approximately \$3,500-4,000 versus the cost of a separate publication and mailing.

COMPANION ANIMALS POSTING ON COUNTY BUILDINGS

As a result of a problem we had with pests brought into a County Building, we plan to post signs at entrances to County buildings prohibiting animals, with the exception of companion animals, similar to what is posted at the U. S. Post Office. While we cannot be sure that bringing an animal into the building caused the problem we had, we feel this measure is in the best interests of employees working in the buildings as well as citizens who visit County facilities.

COMPLAINTS AT PAYNES LANDING, OLIVER LANDING, MAUNDY CREEK LANDING, AND CEDAR BUSH CREEK

Our Director of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism met with VDOT representatives at Paynes Landing regarding complaints that were registered with a VMRC Officer. The Sheriff's Department was also contacted about a complaint at Oliver Landing. Complaints were also raised about trash at the Maundy Creek Landing and about an abandoned boat in Cedar Bush Creek, which staff is working to resolve.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Planning Department has scheduled a Planning Commission work session with the Hampton Roads Planning District Commission (HRPDC) staff for October 7, 2009 at the Library Meeting Room at 7:00 pm to discuss the work on the Comprehensive Plan. Planning Department staff met with HRPDC staff to discuss the Comprehensive Plan work to date and to plan the scheduled work session. Staff plans to establish a bi-monthly schedule to work on the plan with the group, interspersed with public meetings and other opportunities for public outreach, including potentially facebook and twitter.

CONSENT ORDER – UTILITIES DEPARTMENT AND HAMPTON ROADS SANITATION DISTRICT

The County is under a regional Consent Order as a member of the Hampton Roads Sanitation District (HRSD). During September, our Director of Utilities met with the consultants regarding the required work for the Consent Order in this fiscal year, and the current estimate is over \$175,000. We anticipated a substantial cost and there is enough in the budget to cover it. However, this estimate is more than we expected, so we will be covering it in the Utilities budget with other line items. We may reach a point where we have to transfer money into his budget to cover some of this cost.

CONTINGENCY FUND FOR FY 09-10

The following is a summary accounting at September 23, 2009 for the contingency funds included in the fiscal year 2010 budget:

FY 2010 County Administrator's Contingency Fund			
FY 2010 Adopted Budget Amount	\$	316,291	
Estimated Employee Health Insurance Benefits	\$	(121,526)	Estimate
Replacement of Beaverdam Park Boat Motor	\$	(2,900)	
Jail Study for Occupancy Limits	\$	(12,800)	
Estimated Unemployment Payment	\$	(14,000)	Estimate
Broadband Study for Regional Grant	\$	(2,500)	
Repairs/Renovations to Senior Center	\$	(15,000)	
DIT Roof Repairs	\$	(535)	
Flood Claim Grant Application	\$	(3,150)	Estimate
COR Equipment	\$	(1,950)	
KW Poore FOIA	\$	(893)	
Balance Remaining 9-23-2009	\$	141,037	

CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS PLAN (COOP) AND PANDEMIC FLU

The COOP Planning Team established by the County Administrator continues to meet to work on a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP). The Emergency Management Coordinator is in charge of this project. The committee is moving forward with a COOP plan that also addresses pandemic flu.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

At the September 1, 2009 Board meeting, the County Administrator presented the first Monthly County Administrator's Report. It is designed to be simple, summary in nature, and informative to the Board, staff, and the public as to the status of major things going on in the County as of the end of the previous month. Since the Gloucester County Board of Supervisors meets on the first Tuesday of the month, sometimes the end of the previous month is immediately before the Board meeting (as it was for August). Therefore, this

report will NOT be included in the monthly package, as sometimes that would be impossible. It will be e-mailed and presented in written form at the Board meeting. Additionally, in the future, this monthly report will be posted on the County's website as an informational document for citizens.

COURTHOUSE SQUARE HISTORIC DISTRICT

According to the Director of Planning, the subcommittee working on the Courthouse Square (CH) Historic District has come up with their recommendations to "fix" the district which was "corrected" as a result of a discrepancy between the ordinance and the official map. Staff is planning to bring their recommendations to the Planning Commission at the November meeting.

COX CABLE FRANCHISE AGREEMENT

Members of the County staff have entered into informal discussions with Cox Communications as part of the 5-year renewal process for the cable franchise agreement. The County Attorney, Director of Information Technology, and Director of Community Education will be meeting in the next few months to review and discuss needed modifications to the existing franchise agreement.

DENSITY POLICY

At its last meeting, members of the Planning Commission discussed establishing a policy of encouraging developers to off-set increases in density in one area of the County by preserving land outside the development district – "a density neutral policy" -- to preserve the rural character of the rural portion of the county whenever you increase density in the development district or village portions of the County. Members also discussed eventually having a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program, and will explore the applicability of this concept for Gloucester County. The Planning Commission also discussed the use of net density versus gross density for determining development density in the county and the Planning Commission directed staff to provide a general policy about open space and buffers to encourage better open space design along with development.

EMERGENCY ALERT AND EMPLOYEE ALERT SYSTEM AVAILABLE

A new "E-News Emergency Alert System" will soon be available to Gloucester residents who may subscribe through the County's existing e-news system for emergency notifications and announcements in the event a disaster is declared in Gloucester. In addition, Gloucester County Public Schools has offered to share their alert system, which will allow us to notify all parents within their system, as well as use this service for County employee notifications.

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER

The Emergency Management Department, the Department of Information Technology (DIT), the Sheriff's Office, and Community Education met to conduct a practice run and discussion of setting up the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and the phone lines in the event of an emergency.

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN

The revised Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) was adopted by the Board at the September 15, 2009 Board meeting and will be submitted to the state.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS -- JOINT EXERCISE WITH WALTER REED HOSPITAL

Representatives from Walter Reed Hospital, Gloucester Volunteer Fire and Rescue, and Emergency Management participated this month in the Walter Reed Hospital Exercise. The scenario was a chlorine release from the Water Treatment Plant. In addition to County staff, CERT team members and members of the Gloucester Volunteer Fire and Rescue participated in the exercise.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS – REGIONAL EMERGENCY TABLETOP EXERCISE

Gloucester County participated in a regional tabletop emergency management exercise in Tappahannock this month to simulate a disaster situation and practice local, regional, and state response. The simulation involved a tornado which significantly damaged Rappahannock Community College. Our Board Chair participated as an “observer” and joined a number of Gloucester County staff members and volunteers. Overall the County did a good job responding to a tabletop no-notice weather event. One of the most positive things from the exercise was everyone’s comfort level with the response and the partnerships that Schools, Volunteer Fire and Rescue Departments, and the County have. As always, we will get feedback on areas for improvement, in addition to those we have already identified ourselves during the exercise.

FOIA FEES

FOIA provisions allow for the charging of reasonable and fair fees to compensate for staff time involved in researching, compiling, and providing FOIA records and documents. Staff has drafted four categories of hourly fees to represent the most common classification of employees. The recommended fee structure is \$15 for support/clerical; \$20 for specialist; \$30 for director/administrator and actual charge per hour for consultant/professional. It is extremely difficult to provide estimates to citizens up front of the amount of time it will take to fulfill a FOIA request in order to estimate cost. Given that there have been some extremely burdensome FOIA requests in terms of demands on staff time, we have had to work to develop a fair fee structure to help offset these costs to County taxpayers.

FROZEN COUNTY POSITIONS

The following County positions are currently frozen. Positions listed as “frozen and unfunded” remain on the position chart, but were not budgeted for FY 09-10 and remain vacant. As positions have become vacant since the beginning of FY 09-10, each position is frozen and the County Administrator makes the decision, on a case-by-case basis, as to whether to allow that position to be filled or to fill one of the other vacant positions which has remained open for a longer period of time. Therefore, there are also some positions which are “frozen and funded”, as those positions are funded in the current fiscal year, but have been vacated since the start of the fiscal year and have not yet been released to fill.

Office	Position	Type
Frozen and Unfunded:		
County Attorney	Assistant County Attorney	FT
Commissioner of the Revenue	Revenue Technician	FT
Codes Compliance	Inspector I	FT
E-911	Dispatcher	PT
Emergency Services	Administrative Assistant III	FT
Engineer	Public Works Engineer	FT
Buildings & Grounds	Custodian	FT
Tourism	Office Assistant	PT
Utilities	Assistant Director	FT
Utilities	Utility Worker I	FT
Frozen and Funded:		
Parks, Recreation, & Tourism	Park Ranger	FT
Codes Compliance	Permit Technician	FT
Purchasing	Buyer	FT
Parks, Recreation, & Tourism	Program Assistant	PT
Sheriff’s Office	Dispatcher	FT
DIT	Application Programmer	FT

FUEL CONTRACT

The County will begin receiving fuel from our new distributor next week. The change from Phillips to PAPCO results from the IFB (Invitation for Bids) put out by the Purchasing Department a few months ago. This new contract covers gasoline, diesel, and heating fuel.

FULL SERVICE SCHOOL COUNSELING EXPANDS TO PEASLEY

The Community Policy and Management Team approved expansion of counseling services through the Community Services Board to Peasley Middle School for the Full Service School program. Children and families who were participating in counseling services through FSS programs at Bethel and Petsworth will now be able to continue services at Peasley. Community Education staff completed and will be distributing to the Gloucester Community Policy and Management Team the 2008-09 Full Service School Annual Report as well as a case follow-up and tracking report of all participants in the program in previous years.

GANG AWARENESS FORUM

The Gloucester Task Force on Community Concerns with the Board of Supervisors, School Board and the Sheriff's Department sponsored a Gang Community Awareness Forum held on Thursday, September 17, 2009 at Gloucester High School. The event was deemed a success with attendance right at one hundred. The audience was very diverse in attendance, which included concerned grandparents, teens, parents, law enforcement and other agency professionals, local elected officials, etc. The Assistant County Administrator was essential in setting up and the planning the details of this event and the Department of Community Education assisted in all publicity areas to help promote participation.

GLOUCESTER BUSINESS PARK TRAFFIC SIGNAL

The Request for Quotations for the traffic signal at the Gloucester Business Park were received in September. The low bidder was Dagan Electric from Virginia Beach. This company previously did the signal installation work at U.S. 17 and Guinea/Hook Roads. The Economic Development Authority (EDA) approved the Dagan Electric bid and authorized the contract for the signal construction. The approximate price of the bid was \$154,000 and the contract dates are September 24, 2009 to February 23, 2010. The EDA has begun to receive the Transportation Opportunity Funds for the signal design and construction; the total amount of the incentive was \$200,000 and we have received \$21,544. Additionally, the EDA, as a part of the sale of land to Sentara, will receive \$20,000 for the signal.

GLOUCESTER POINT LIBRARY

County staff continues to review potential options for a new site for the Gloucester Point Library, given that we have to vacate the current facility in 2011, and is currently exploring options and associated costs for a new site.

GRANT AWARD FOR SURGICAL MASKS FOR FIRST RESPONDERS

Through the efforts of the Emergency Management office, the County was awarded a grant of \$1,560 to purchase 2,600 surgical masks for first responders.

GRANT -- MINI-FIRE TRAINING GRANT

Through the office of Emergency Management, the County applied for a Mini-Fire Training grant for \$10,000. The grant application was submitted to buy materials to expand the current burn room at the Middle Peninsula training facility.

GRAVES AND CONCERNS OF VIRAL INFECTION

Some citizens have inquired about some graves which were disturbed in the Gloucester Point area, and expressed concern about the potential for viral infection from those disturbed remains. According to information obtained by staff from the Health Department, citizens need not be concerned about exposed

remains of people who died from the 1918 Pandemic with the Spanish Flu because a virus cannot survive without a host in the environment for more than 48 hours.

GROUP HOME IN DUTTON AREA

Codes compliance has received an application for a group home in the Dutton area. There is a distinction between this facility and other proposed facilities. This particular facility is for a group home for “physically handicapped veterans”, which is addressed in our code and requires a special exception. This request is a Board of Zoning Appeals matter, and it was approved by the BZA in September.

GUINEA ROAD CONVENIENCE CENTER ISSUES

Citizens have expressed concerns about changes at the Guinea Road Convenience Center regarding disposal of brush and yard debris. After interactions with our Department of Public Works, Waste Management committed to make some improvements at the site. However, the estimated cost of needed improvements was not planned and will mean the improvements will take longer than they had anticipated. They are committing to get the work done by the first quarter of 2010. Meanwhile, they have made some other changes which should improve conditions for citizens until these changes to the site layout can be made. They have placed two roll-off cans perpendicular to the wall and an extra yard waste can to help provide citizens with an easier method to dump brush from the top of the convenience center into the cans below.

H1N1 FLU

There is a general heightened awareness of the threat of swine flu this fall, especially in specific sub-populations. The inoculations will not be available until October, and may not be widely available to all segments of the population then, as Health Department officials will be targeting vulnerable groups. The County has identified some funds in the budget – leftover flex benefits plan money which can only be used for certain things -- to provide free flu shots for employees. This free seasonal flu shot will be offered to employees at a scheduled place and time as soon as sufficient supply becomes available, with an anticipated date some time in early October. We may also explore offering a clinic for H1N1 flu shots, with or without a financial subsidy depending on whether or not there are funds left over from the first round. Additionally, we have provided all departments with antiviral hand sanitizer, hand wipes, and tissues for employees. We believe that preventing significant outbreaks of flu in our staff protects our County employees, reduces lost staff time, reduces the spread of any flu outbreaks, protects citizens, and provides the best opportunity for uninterrupted services to citizens. Per all the sage advice on prevention, WASH YOUR HANDS frequently and thoroughly and STAY HOME if you are sick with the flu and fever!

HAMPTON ROADS SANITATION DISTRICT (HRSD) INTEREST PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT FUNDS

Since we now know we will not need the \$113,000 we have budgeted in the Debt Fund for the Hampton Roads Sanitation District interest participation agreement, we will likely transfer these funds into the County Administrator’s Contingency Fund to be accessed as needed.

HEIGHT OF ACCESSORY STRUCTURES IN RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS --- PROPOSED ORDINANCE MODIFICATION REGARDING SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DWELLING AND ACCESSORY STRUCTURES

The Planning Commission held a public hearing on September 4, 2009 on the proposed amendment to modify how single family residential dwellings and structures accessory to them, located in residentially zoned districts, are measured. The amendment will also modify the maximum allowable height for these structures based on the proposed method of measurement.

- The proposal permits accessory structures located within required setbacks for the principal structure to be the same height as the principal structure.
- Single family residential structures and structures accessory to them that meet the principal structure setbacks will have a maximum allowable height of fifty (50) feet.

- Accessory structures located outside the principal setbacks but no closer than five (5) feet to the side and rear property lines will have a maximum allowable height of thirty-five (35) feet.
- The amendment will also permit homes located within certain designated special flood hazard areas to have a maximum allowable height of fifty-five (55) feet.
- The proposal specifies the number of stories permitted for accessory structures as two (2) stories and maintains the number of stories permitted for principal structures as two and a half (2.5) stories.

No one spoke at the public hearing and a motion to forward this to the Board passed by a 10 to 1 vote with 2 absences. The need for this ordinance modification came from controversy over height of accessory structures and interpretation of the existing ordinance. This matter is planned to be heard in October.

HOSPICE HOUSE INQUIRY

The Planning Department has received an inquiry regarding opening a hospice house in Gloucester. It appears that our ordinance does not currently address such a use other than through a hospital. The potential applicant is working with Riverside. Once more information is available, staff will determine if it would be permitted under the current zoning or if a code amendment would be required.

HOUSING ISSUES -- AFFORDABLE HOUSING

In September, members of Planning Department and the Housing Department attended the Virginia Housing Development Authority (VHDA) free training on sustainable affordable housing. Following this meeting, Planning Department staff will coordinate a group to discuss a County policy on how to administer an affordable housing program. Some of the tools discussed during the training will be helpful in our comprehensive plan and looking at options for affordable housing. At part of the free training, we were also able to get HUD books for free and plan to use them as we work on this issue.

HURRICANE EVACUATION MEETING

On behalf of Gloucester County, our Emergency Management Coordinator attended a Hurricane Evacuation meeting. It was reiterated that no additional resources from the State will be allocated to help the evacuation on Route 17. All of their resources will be designated to I-64.

JOINT MEETING WITH THE SCHOOL BOARD

At the September 29 Joint Meeting, both the Board of Supervisors and the School Board agreed to postpone any discussion or consideration of consolidated services for a year. Additionally, they agreed to hold at least two joint meetings a year – one in the September/October time frame and one in March. Topics also discussed included last year’s budget outcome, the Governor’s cuts to local budget funding, the current year’s budget, the Capital Improvements Plan process, next year’s budget, fund balance and carry-over policies, and other matters of mutual interest.

MAIN STREET PRESERVATION TRUST

Our Planning Director met with representatives of the Main Street Preservation Trust (MSPT) about some of the projects the MSPT is working on, including the historic district expansion (for the National Register, not local regulation). We are helping with getting addresses of the properties on Main Street to hold a meeting about the benefits of being on the National Register and to go over their proposed survey area. The meeting is planned for early October. The Planning Director plans to present the Courthouse Village Plan, which was commissioned by the Main Street Preservation Trust (MSPT) and the County, at the November meeting of the Planning Commission (PC). We will ask the Planning Commission to recommend that the plan be adopted by the County and have the PC hold a public hearing prior to making a recommendation to the Board.

MAIN STREET VDOT ENHANCEMENT PROJECT

Our Director of Public Works met with VDOT representatives and our conceptual plan for the Main Street Enhancement Project is generally fine. A public meeting has been advertised for October 22 to be held in

the Colonial Courthouse at 7:00 pm. Specific invitations have been sent to adjacent property owners, former Main Street Committee members, and the Historical Committee. The meeting is open to the public.

MATHEWS SEWAGE TRANSMISSION LINE MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

At its September 1 meeting, the Board accepted the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Hampton Roads Sanitation District (HRSD) covering the Mathews Sewage Transmission Line. The County has received our copy of this fully executed agreement. The agreement outlines responsibilities of HRSD and the County regarding the line being installed by HRSD to correct a sewage treatment problem in Mathews County.

NO WAKE ORDINANCE AND DEPARTMENT OF GAME AND INLAND FISHERIES

Representatives from the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) will attend the October 20 Board work session and brief the Board about issues related to our No Wake Ordinance and signage. We hope to make a staff recommendation at that time as to whether we need to change our existing ordinance.

OLIVER BOAT LANDING PIER

The Oliver Boat Landing Pier has been rebuilt and is open for use by the public.

PANDEMIC PLAN

The County has a draft pandemic plan in place that will be in effect during “active” flu seasons. This plan can be used if there is an H1N1 outbreak. Staff has been briefed on prevention measures, and we are continually forwarding information to employees to help protect them and to avoid an outbreak.

PARKS COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECTS

A representative from Home Depot met with our Director of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism to discuss future community service projects that Home Depot employees can perform in County parks. Several ideas for projects were suggested.

PET SHELTERING TABLETOP EXERCISE

Emergency Management Department staff ran a tabletop Pet Sheltering Exercise with Animal Control, Schools, and Social Services. The exercise went well and ironed out some specific details between Animal Control and Social Services. The Procurement Department staff is also moving forward with a pet cleaning contract to clean up the areas used for this purpose following an emergency requiring pet sheltering.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

The two public hearings that were scheduled for the October 6th meeting were inadvertently left out of the Gazette-Journal. This was not an error on our part. Unfortunately, after review advertising deadlines and conferring with legal counsel, it was determined that the code legal requirements for advertising could not be met, even by using other publications. A new resolution will be on the consent agenda on October 6th asking for authorization to advertise for the October 20th meeting. The applicant for the rezoning was informed of the error and that we cannot move forward with a public hearing if there is any question about the legality of the advertisements. The public hearings were for (1) code amendment CA-09-04, setbacks for accessory structures in townhouse developments and (2) rezoning application Z-09-03, Coleman’s Crossing in the Gloucester Point Magisterial District from B-3 to B-1 and MF-1.

PURCHASING ORDINANCE

Our Purchasing Manager has drafted a County Purchasing Ordinance, which is being reviewed by the County Attorney and other staff. We hope to present this proposed ordinance to the Board for consideration in November.

QUILTS SHOW

The Parks, Recreation and Tourism Department sponsored the Quilts of River Country Show in the Court Circle this month.

REASSESSMENT APPEALS PROCESS

In anticipation of mailing the reassessment notices, staff is working on the Reassessment Department review and appeals process. We will require that folks interested in an administrative review complete an application form which will provide essential information and a mechanism to document why they believe their assessment to be incorrect. It will prompt them as to what kinds of information they could provide to support their argument for a reconsideration of value. Additionally, we will be allowing telephone interviews where appropriate and will set up appointments at places that are more convenient for citizens and after hours, for folks whose work schedule makes it difficult to make appointments during the day. Staff in the Department of Community Education have been instrumental in designing and updating the webpage that will contain all the necessary online forms and instructions, current reassessment information, and links to the land records database. The department has also assisted with all publicity materials, information, and town meetings as well as media releases.

REASSESSMENT ARTICLE

A recent web article in Government Technology entitled “Virginia County to Premier In-House Reassessment Tool” discusses Gloucester County’s efforts to use GIS tools to help analyze data in order to determine a property’s value during the development of our in-house Reassessment Process. The link to the article is <http://www.govtech.com/gt/724648?topic=117676>.

REASSESSMENT INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS

The last of three Reassessment Informational Meetings was held in September at Petsworth Elementary School. The informational video, which was produced in-house by the Department of Community Education, is being shown on Channel 48 at 7:45 am, noon, 1:30 pm, 5:00 pm, 6:45 pm and 11:00 pm daily and DVDs are available for checkout at both public library branches. In addition, there is general information about the reassessment process at the Gloucester Real Estate Assessment Department’s website at: <http://www.gloucesterva.info/assessment/>. Town meetings featuring reassessment as a topic will be held by Ms. Altemus on October 13 at Achilles Elementary School and Mr. Crewe on October 19 at Abingdon Elementary School. County staff will be on hand at both meetings to assist in answering further questions citizens may have.

REASSESSMENT NOTICES

Although we had hoped to mail Reassessment Notices to citizens by the end of September, we found that the last component of our model development, dealing with contiguous properties owned by the same owner, produced valuation results on those parcels which were not consistent with our internal quality control standards. Staff is working to rectify this situation, and we will keep the Board and the public informed as to what to expect in terms of the mailing of the notices. County Reassessment Department personnel are working very hard, including over the weekends, to produce a high quality reassessment product for the citizens. An informative media release will be distributed when notices are mailed to provide information to citizens, especially about the departmental review process and required application form. All forms and instructions will be available online and at both public library branches.

REDUCTION IN FORCE AND TEMPORARY WORK FORCE REDUCTION PLANS

Since we considered having to lay people off during the last budget process, we became aware that the County does not at present have what is commonly called a RIF, or Reduction in Force Plan. The County Administrator is in the process of developing two draft Administrative Policies. One policy, a Temporary Work Force Reduction (TWFR) Plan, would outline how we would make temporary changes in workforce to save money in a financial crisis, e.g., cutting back hours, changed workweek, etc. The second policy, a

Reduction in Force or RIF Plan, would outline how we would actually eliminate positions. We plan to present these draft policies to the Board soon before they are incorporated into our Administrative Policies.

SENIOR CITIZEN ANNEX REPAIR/RENOVATION PROJECT

The Board approved in September a proposal to accept \$25,000 offered by the Main Street Preservation Trust toward repairs needed at the Senior Citizen Annex on Main Street provided that the County provide two handicap accessible rest rooms, with exterior access, to be open and usable for public events in the building. Our Director of Public Works is working on this project.

SEWER PROJECTS AT PROVIDENCE ROAD AREA, SAWGRASS POINT AREA, AND TERRAPIN COVE ROAD AREA

The Director of Utilities reports incremental progress on the Providence Road sewer extension and the Preliminary Engineering Studies for Sawgrass Point and Terrapin Cove areas at the Point.

SHELTERING AGREEMENT

Our Emergency Management Coordinator is working on developing a mutual aid agreement between Schools, Red Cross, Social Services, and Emergency Management for Sheltering.

SHORELINE ISSUES -- VIMS TRAINING ON SHORELINE ISSUES

Staff from Planning, the Environmental Programs Division of the Codes Compliance Department, and the Community Education Director attended the training at VIMS regarding near coastal shoreline issues. There was a lot of good discussion of potential issues and solutions. Many of these will be discussed during the comprehensive plan process and the workshop was helpful in getting the entire staff up to speed with the broader issues as well as some of the local concerns.

SHORELINE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Our Planning Director was approached by VIMS personnel about the development of a shoreline management plan for Gloucester County. VIMS has just completed one for Mathews County (the first county in Virginia to have such a plan). The study would provide recommendations for waterfront property owners on how to best manage erosion based on the site specific criteria (existing conditions, reach, type of water body, wave action, etc). It also takes into consideration environmental concerns relative to submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV's), increase in wetland habitat, and other potential impacts. VIMS may be able to apply for grants to help cover some of the costs. Staff is discussing with VIMS folks the benefits as well as the potential costs and funding mechanisms for such a plan, and will present further information about it to the Board at a later date.

SKATEBOARD SPOT

The Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism is working on a planned Skateboard Spot at Brown Park. The Director of Public Works reviewed the skateboard spot plans provided by the American Ramp Company. Edits were provided to the company and they will resubmit the plans. The documents will be used to hire a local contractor for the pad work. The purchase order was issued for the equipment that will be placed on top of the concrete pad at the Skateboard Spot, and it will take approximately six weeks to construct the pieces. A civil engineer is submitting a revision to the site plan of Brown Park to incorporate the Skate Spot. A bid will be released soon for construction of the pad.

SOCIAL SERVICES COOLING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

According to our Social Services Director, the Energy Assistance program, known as Cooling Assistance, provided a total of \$98,432.10 in payments to vendors in Gloucester County to assist low income disabled persons and low income families with children to meet their cooling needs. A large portion of this amount was provided to Dominion Virginia Power directly to continue electrical services needed to run either fans or air conditioning units. This is a significant increase over last year. Last year the total approved amount

was \$21,184.94. The number of families/individuals served doubled this year but the total amount approved was almost four times the amount of last year. More folks were eligible for a higher benefit this year as well.

STATE PARK MASTER PLANNING COMMITTEE

Representatives from Virginia's Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) have informed us that the State is ready to begin the master planning process for the proposed State Park in Gloucester County. The Director of DCR names the committee, but they have asked for suggestions from the County. Certain positions are automatic appointments (such as our Director of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism and Director of Planning). Our Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Director is working on appointment suggestions. No timeline on the process was given.

STRATEGIC PLAN – 350 STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

Since the BOS adopted the strategic plan at the September 1 meeting, staff is reviewing the existing plan with two aims in mind: (1) providing an update to the Board on what things have already been accomplished, what items are in progress or ongoing, what items are on hold pending funding, etc. and (2) recommendations to the Board as to items to add (such as "green" goals, as was mentioned in the BOS meeting, or broadband objectives) and what items need to be eliminated or modified, along with any budget implications. We hope to make a presentation to the Board at the November 17 Board Meeting.

SURPLUS ITEMS

The Purchasing Department has published a list of surplus items that have accumulated over a number of years in the County and have published them in an electronic auction site for public sale. Before the items are to be released for public sale, a preview has been made available to all departments for possible re-use and a number of items have been put back into service. This effort moves us from an antiquated methodology for getting rid of surplus items, eliminates the need for storage space, and is more aggressive in returning items with remaining potential use back into service.

T. C. WALKER HOUSE

In September, along with members of the Economic Development Authority (EDA), the County's Director of Economic Development attended meetings of the State Review Board and the Historic Resources Board in Richmond where the nomination for the T.C. Walker House on the National Registry of Historic Landmarks was considered. The Boards approved the nomination and will forward the application to the Federal level for their consideration. We expect to hear in the next two to three months.

TIMBERNECK FARMS

Representatives from Timberneck LLC are actively looking for lots on which to build the five affordable homes as part of the Timberneck Rezoning project. Staff has provided them with contact information for some of the developers which might have lots available.

TOWN MEETINGS

Supervisors Altemus and Crewe have planned Town Meetings for their magisterial districts in October. Ms. Altemus' meeting is planned for Tuesday, October 13 at Achilles Elementary School and Mr. Crewe's meeting is planned for Monday, October 19 at Abingdon Elementary School. Various staff have been requested to attend those meetings, particularly to address issues of general concern from citizens as well as questions regarding the reassessment, including the notices, the results, the modeling, and the reassessment review/appeals process.

TRANSITIONAL HOMES

The Planning Commission (PC) had a work session on Transitional Homes in September. The Director of Planning reports that they made progress and the Planning Commission is exploring some new ideas as to

how the County might handle this type of proposed project. The proposal being considered involves establishing a new process for conditional use permits (CUP) to go to the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors, similar to a rezoning process. Staff hopes to bring a draft to the PC for their November 5 meeting and then to be on track for a December public hearing in the Planning Commission meeting.

TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

Through the Hampton Roads Transportation Planning Organization (HRTPO) and the Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TTAC), the Director of Planning worked to provide transportation projects for the 2034 Long Range Plan (LRP) and submit projects for funding using CMAQ and RSTP funds. Our Planning Director worked to get assistance from the VDOT Fredericksburg District to submit applications for the Congestion Management – Air Quality/ Regional Surface Transportation Program (CMAQ/RSTP) funding through the HRTPO. It is doubtful that anything we submitted will be funded, as we are limited in the projects we could submit, because they have to be in the Long Range Plan (LRP) which includes regionally significant projects that are fiscally constrained. None of our projects are in the plan. However we can submit projects not eligible for the plan, like pedestrian and bicycle projects or planning studies. We submitted projects for a planning study of the Main Street Corridor to address the congestion, safety, and pedestrian and bicycle mobility along and across this corridor to the west side of the by-pass. We also submitted projects to create bike/pedestrian friendly streetscapes along Hayes Road and Guinea Road to encourage non-motorized local traffic in these areas, and a signal coordination study of the signals on Route 17 and potential pedestrian access.

UTILITIES BILL ISSUE

Last month, an issue was raised about the County’s ordinance which provides that past-due utility bills must be paid before service can be turned on at a County residence. Staff presented a summary of what the ordinance provides during a September Board meeting at the request of a member of the Board, for the benefit of the public. This ordinance ensures that past due amounts are paid, so that the burden of that cost for used utility services is not passed along to the rest of the users in the system.

VDOT’S NEW ACCESS MANAGEMENT REGULATIONS

Planning Department staff is working with VDOT on the process to implement VDOT’s new Access Management regulations, which go into effect on October 14. This will involve VDOT review of most plats, even minor subdivisions, with access on a state road. It does not appear that the new regulations will significantly affect our current process of plat review, although VDOT may provide additional comments regarding the location of new private roads and their site distance requirements.

WATER EMERGENCY RESPONSE (DROUGHT) PROCEDURES

At the September 1 Board meeting, the Board approved ordinance amendments covering the Water Emergency Response (Drought) Procedures. These procedures will be critical in times of water shortages and make our local ordinances compliant with state code. The modifications allow for declared water emergency events, as required.

WEBEOC

WebEOC has been installed. The Emergency Management Office staff will be training County employees over the next few months and all Board members will be set up with accounts that will allow them to view any significant events occurring in the County. This internet-based system allows all folks involved in an emergency situation to view the status of various components of the emergency response, as well as for those with access to the system to input updates as to the status of a component. (E.g., a Fire and Rescue unit asks for a particular piece of equipment, a request is made to the state, a locality offers assistance, it’s reported as being in transit – all of these are continually updated in the system.)

WHALE

As was reported in the media, a ten-ton humpback whale that was beached in the Gloucester Point area was towed across the York River to a secluded nearby island. We had staff being asked if the landfill could take the carcass, and while we were working on finding out from DEQ what we were allowed and not allowed to do in that regard, the whale was towed. Our Emergency Management Coordinator and our Director of Public Works received inquiries and we were working on how we could help with regard to this major undertaking.

“WHERE IN THE WORLD IS...BRENDA GARTON?”

The County Administrator has implemented a system for a once a month visit to a particular County building for the purpose of being kept up to date on what is going on in various departments, giving employees an opportunity for interaction and to ask questions, and a general learning process. In June, the County Administrator spent a Friday with the Community Education Department, visiting each school with a Community Education office and being informed about various aspects of their programs. In July, the visit was with Public Works staff and included a tour of facilities throughout the County. During August, part of a Friday was spent with County staff at the Gloucester Library and the Gloucester Point Library, talking with staff, touring facilities, and learning about programs. No visit was scheduled in September due to scheduling issues. County employees seem to really appreciate explaining the work they do and having an opportunity for face-to-face interaction with the County Administrator.

WOOD RECYCLING SUBCOMMITTEE

The Wood Recycling subcommittee met before the Planning Commission meeting to discuss where these facilities could locate in the County. We came up with some new ideas, including the potential for a new type of “rural industrial” district rather than including this in the industrial category and risk spot zoning. Staff will research and work on some of the ideas and continue to meet with the subcommittee until we have a proposal to bring back to the PC.

WOODVILLE PLANTATION PARK AND ROAD

Regarding the Woodville Plantation Park, the County received a \$250,000 VDOT Recreational Access Road Grant to design and build an entrance road into Woodville Plantation Park. The project is 100% reimbursable through VDOT and we have been assured by VDOT that the funding for the project is firmly pledged. Other than staff time, there are no County funds being used for this project. We also have access to another \$100,000 with a 50/50 match requirement. We have spent approximately \$50,000 on engineering and soil studies, all of which is part of the reimbursable funding. In anticipation of the road costing more than the allotted funds, we requested two alternates for a shorter road than originally planned. Eleven bids were received in response to our solicitation for the Woodville Plantation Park Road Construction. All bids exceeded the program’s budget and we have requested the low bidder to consider negotiating a lower cost for any items that can be eliminated from the initiative. Options on this project will be presented to the Board for their review.

Thursday, October 8, 2009; 1:13 pm